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INFO ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/13/2016
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [UNSC](#) [MEPN](#) [EG](#) [LE](#)
SUBJECT: (C) LEBANON: EGYPT BACKING PM SINIORA TO PURSUE
UNIIIC HARIRI TRIBUNAL; WARNS SYRIA TO "BE CAREFUL"

CLASSIFIED BY DCM STUART JONES FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

11. (C) THE AMBASSADOR SPOKE WITH EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER AHMED ABOUL GHEIT NOVEMBER 13 TO URGE GOE SUPPORT FOR LEBANESE PRIME MINISTER FOUAD SINIORA, FOLLOWING THE RECENT RESIGNATIONS OF HIZBALLAH-AFFILIATED CABINET MINISTERS FROM THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT. ABOUL GHEIT CONFIRMED TO THE AMBASSADOR GOE SUPPORT FOR SINIORA, AND NOTED THAT HE TOLD SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER MUALLEM THE PREVIOUS DAY IN CAIRO "TO BE CAREFUL" WITH RESPECT TO SARG INTERFERENCE IN LEBANESE POLITICS. ABOUL GHEIT ALSO SAID THAT HE MADE A SUPPORTIVE PUBLIC STATEMENT ON THE LEBANON SITUATION TO LOCAL JOURNALISTS ON NOVEMBER 12. (NOTE: THE STATEMENT, PRINTED IN LOCAL MEDIA ON NOVEMBER 13, CALLED ON ALL LEBANESE POLITICAL FORCES TO CONTINUE THEIR DIALOGUE TO OVERCOME DIFFERENCES. ABOUL GHEIT ADVISED LEBANESE POLITICAL PARTIES AGAINST "TAKING DIFFERENCES TO THE STREET," AS SUCH A MOVE WOULD NEGATIVELY AFFECT LEBANON'S AND THE REGION'S SECURITY SITUATION, "ESPECIALLY GIVEN COMPLICATIONS ON THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE." END NOTE.)

12. (C) ABOUL GHEIT'S COMMENTS ECHOED THOSE OF EGYPTIAN INTELLIGENCE CHIEF OMAR SOLIMAN, WHO TOLD THE AMBASSADOR ON NOVEMBER 11 THAT EGYPTIAN POLICY VIS-A-VIS LEBANON WAS THE "SAME AS THAT OF THE U.S." SOLIMAN BELIEVED THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON SHOULD PURSUE THE UNIIIC HARIRI MURDER TRIBUNAL PROPOSAL RECENTLY PRESENTED TO PM SINIORA. SOLIMAN TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT HE "EXPECTED THE GOE" WOULD SEND A MESSAGE OF ENCOURAGEMENT TO SINIORA, AND THAT FM ABOUL GHEIT WOULD EXPRESS EGYPT'S POSITION TO THE VISITING SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER WHEN THE TWO MET ON THE MARGINS OF AN ARAB LEAGUE MINISTERIAL MEETING ON GAZA. SOLIMAN SAID THAT THE EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER WOULD WARN THE SYRIANS TO "BACK OFF" FROM THEIR PRESSURING THE LEBANESE PRIME MINISTER AND HIS ALLIES. RICCIARDONE